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The readership of caricatures in the Brazilian Belle Époque: the case of the illustrated magazine *Careta* (1908-1922)

Felipe Botelho CORRÊA*

Abstract: This study focuses on the readership of the Brazilian illustrated humour magazine, *Careta*, throughout its first fourteen years (1908-1922). The intention is to place *Careta* within its national and international context whilst addressing some of the magazine's historical aspects. Moreover, the study will shed light on the peculiarities of this important publication by comparing and contrasting it with two other magazines of the time (*O Malho* and *Fon-Fon!*) from Rio de Janeiro. It will be argued that *Careta* is one of the first examples of a cheap, well-printed magazine reaching a large nationwide and international readership on a regular basis.

Keywords: Illustrated magazines. Caricature. History of the Press in Brazil. *Careta* (magazine).

Os leitores de caricaturas da Belle Époque brasileira: o caso da revista ilustrada *Careta* (1908-1922)

Resumo: Este artigo enfoca o público-leitor da revista ilustrada e humorística *Careta* durante seus primeiros quatorze anos (1908-1922). A intenção aqui é situar *Careta* dentro do seu contexto nacional e internacional, abordando alguns dos aspectos históricos da revista. Além disso, são esclarecidas e destacadas algumas das especificidades desta importante publicação, contrastando-a com duas outras revistas cariocas da época (*O Malho* e *Fon-Fon!*). O argumento principal é que *Careta* foi um dos primeiros exemplos de uma revista barata e bem impressa que atingiu regularmente um grande público leitor nacional e internacional.

Palavras-chave: Revistas ilustradas. Caricatura. História da imprensa no Brasil. *Careta* (revista).

Magazines were by no means a novelty at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, but the success of cheap, well-printed, illustrated magazines reaching national

* Doctor of Philosophy student in Modern Languages (Portuguese) at Wolfson College, University of Oxford. Master in Social Communication (PUC-Rio). Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD, United Kingdom. The research that resulted in this article was funded by Clarendon Award, Wolfson College Award, and Magallen Prize. Email: botelhocorrea@gmail.com

massive circulations certainly was. Although various factors might explain this complex change, the growth of national advertising, new printing technologies, and an increase in circulation are widely accepted as the most important aspects of this shift. This watershed moment was to start in the USA and Europe and then spread to other countries in the Americas such as Argentina, México and Brazil, where magazines first achieved regular national distribution, following nationwide industrial expansion, epitomised by the national exhibitions.

From a structure dependent upon local consumers in the late nineteenth century, magazines became consolidated in the beginning of the twentieth century as media enterprises focused upon consumers nationwide, which can be explained by a change in the way advertisers were reaching consumers. In the nineteenth century, the sales stream flowed from manufacturer to jobber to retailer to consumer, and advertising was pretty much limited to the last part of this stream. And because the retailer's market was local, not nationwide, the media used to advertise periodicals with close-to-home circulations rather than the nationally or regionally distributed magazines. This is one of the main reasons for nationwide magazines not carrying a large amount of advertising before the turn of the century (MOTT, 1930, p. 21-22).

However, with the increase of advertisers aiming at reaching larger audiences, nationally distributed magazines started to play a key role in the advertising business. On top of this, a new printing technique of photoengraving (the halftone) enabled publishers to produce well-printed cheap magazines featuring photographs, illustrations and caricatures alongside the texts. By keeping the price of each issue as low as possible, magazines became affordable to a new audience, and this opened an avenue for publishers to exploit the success of a low-priced illustrated magazine for the general public.

These magazines tended to be published weekly or monthly, in contrast to the daily newspapers. With this longer time span between issues, editors were able to prepare diverse content, vary layouts and use more images in each issue to attract readers. Moreover, they were able to revisit selected news items from the previous week/month, as the word “revista” in Portuguese and Spanish suggests, from a different perspective, often opting for a satirical tone. A more widely-spaced periodicity also augmented the magazine's lifespan among readers and increased the possibility of including more caricatures commenting on current affairs events.

In Brazil, this new model of magazine publishing was to become more apparent at the beginning of the 1900s, especially with regard to magazines with a considerable focus on caricature. One of the first successful illustrated magazines was *O Malho* launched in 1902, followed by many others, including *Fon-Fon!* in 1907, and *Careta* in 1908.¹ These three were weekly satirical magazines made up of caricatures and miscellaneous content which was

attractive to the general reader anywhere in the country. With a growing circulation nationwide and with the aim of persuading advertisers to invest in them, these magazines promoted a clearer distinction between them and daily newspapers, thus creating an interesting period in the history of magazines in Brazil.

In that era, as is the case today, magazine publishers needed to use a high quality paper (“papel-acetinado”) in order to deliver issues full of good quality images, superior presentation, and longer durability than newspapers. This strategy worked well financially until the late 1910s, when the publishers were hit by a paper crisis provoked by the First World War, which affected the price of paper internationally. In 1919, the publishers of the four main illustrated magazines in Brazil wrote and signed a petition appealing to President Epitácio Pessoa not to withdraw the tax exemption for “papel-acetinado”.² In the petition the four publishers claim that in Brazil, like in countries such as USA, England, Germany and France, illustrated magazines were equally as important as daily newspapers, even though they reached a different readership:

Os jornais diários, mesmo os de grande tiragem, circulam pelo interior numa proporção mínima, comparada à circulação das principais revistas publicadas na Capital, que mandam para todo o Brasil, mesmo aos sertões mais longínquos, 60 a 70 por cento das suas consideráveis edições, sendo este talvez o meio mais prático de divulgação por todo o vasto território nacional não só dos acontecimentos da Capital como das noções instrutivas de todo o gênero, seja pela sua profusa e nítida reportagem fotográfica, de que as revistas têm monopólio devido à qualidade de seu papel, seja pela reprodução em linha nacional de tudo quanto sucede no mundo, de arte, ciência, indústria, comércio, etc., concorrendo desta forma para a propagação e conhecimentos úteis às classes obrigadas a viverem fora dos grandes centros (*Careta* n. 597, 29 November 1919).³¹

This difference between readerships should not be forgotten. By focusing on nationwide audiences, illustrated magazines set up an industrial structure of production and distribution that reached Brazilians all over the territory, something that even the largest daily newspapers lacked at the turn of the century. Therefore it is clear that the editors of these magazines had in mind not only the readership of Rio, but also and especially, that of the

¹ In comparison to the main magazines published in the Capital, only a small proportion of daily newspapers reach the countryside, even those with a large circulation. The magazines manage to distribute between 60% and 70% of their substantial weekly issues to all parts of the country, reaching even the farthest backlands. These magazines are, perhaps, the most practical means of delivering not only news from the Capital but instructive information of all kinds across the vast Brazilian territory. This may be because of the plentiful and clear photographs that illustrate the stories, on which they have a monopoly due to the quality of their printing paper, or because of their nationwide reproduction of everything that happens in the world relating to art, science, industry, trade, etc., which makes them key to the propagation of useful knowledge to all classes obliged to live outside the big cities.

interior. Hence, illustrated magazines became the means to communicate with citizens in a vast country such as the Brazil.

In order to gain a better understanding of the beginning of the massive nationwide circulation of magazines in Brazil, I will now discuss the case of *Careta*, contrasting it with *Fon-Fon!* and *O Malho*.

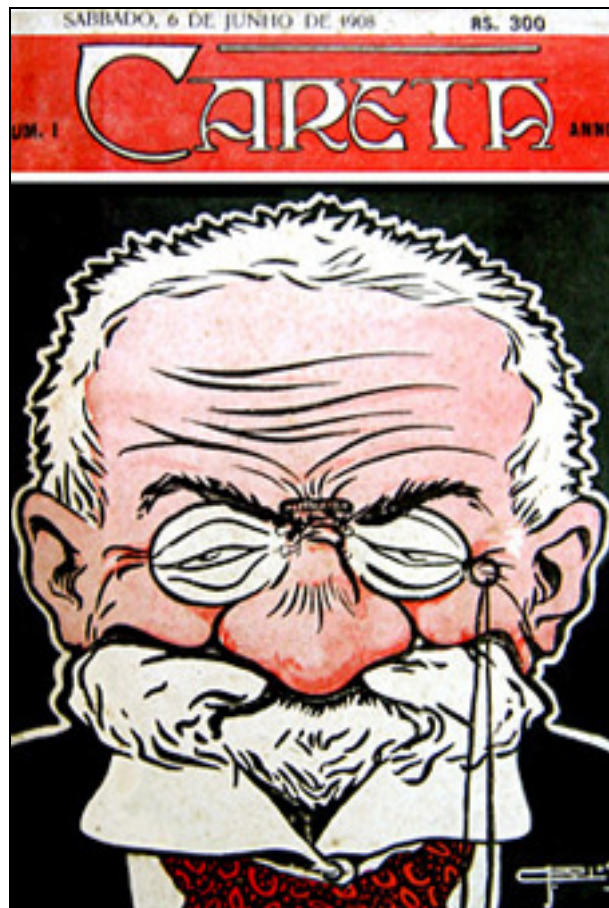


Figure 1 - *Careta*, n. 1, 6 June 1908.

Towards a nation of readers

Careta is one of the best examples of the magazine boom in Brazil at the turn of the century. Conducted on business lines from its very beginning, it lasted for more than five decades, surviving the competition with cinema in the 1920s and radio in the 1930s and 1940s, but not with television in the 1950s. As a family business, the magazine came to an end in 1960, after the death of Roberto Schmidt, the son of the founder.⁴



Figure 2 - Jorge Schmidt by J. Carlos. *Careta*, n. 157, 3 June 1911.

The launch of *Careta* in 1908 was the result of a long process during which its owner, Jorge Schmidt, was trying to succeed as a businessman in the graphic arts sector. In 1896, he founded the “Papelaria Carneiro tipographia e lithografia [...] para o comércio de livros e papel” in Rua da Alfândega, at the heart of the commercial centre of Brazil’s capital city. (DOU 12/09/1896, p. 3988). With the knowledge acquired from working with different types of paper, printing, and commercial photography, Schmidt decided later on to experiment with

various ways of printing images on postcards (Careta, n. 157, 3 Jun 1911). These experiments were successful and by 1901 he already had his own typography and printing establishment – J. Schmidt editor – which printed postcards showing images of Rio de Janeiro.

The success of postcards printed by means of photo-mechanical techniques played a great role in Schmidt's decision to launch the magazine *Kósmos* in January 1904. Since he was able to print images and books, moving on to a periodical was probably a tactic to gain an increasingly regular income through readers' subscriptions.

At the time, *Kósmos* was a successful publication, with thirty thousand subscribers in 1907 (BILAC apud DIMAS, 2006, p.380). However, like many magazines of the period, it did not have a lifespan. It is not altogether clear whether Schmidt founded *Careta* in 1909 in order to replace *Kósmos*, or whether he was making a strategic choice between the two publications. The fact is that he invested money into a complete renovation of the printing presses at his publishing house throughout 1908, updating them into more modern machines. But it was not only the equipment that was renovated; Schmidt's publications also indicated a new direction in his thinking. It is clear that *Careta* had a more popular appeal than *Kósmos*, but it seems he did not see them as rivals. The two magazines even co-existed for almost a year with different publication frequencies and targets.

At the beginning of 1908, before the renovation process started, Schmidt was printing books⁵, and three different illustrated periodicals – *Kósmos* (monthly), *Fon-Fon!* (weekly) and *O Diário* (daily). However, in a very short space of time (1908-1909), a number of events happened almost simultaneously: some issues of *Kósmos* and *Fon-Fon!* came out late or experienced printing problems (*Kósmos*, January 1909); the owners of *Fon-Fon!* decided to move to another printing-house (*Fon-Fon!* 25 April 1908. “Uma explicação”); *Careta* appeared for the first time; the publication of *Kósmos* ceased (April 1909); and another magazine, *O Filhote da Careta*, was launched.⁶

If we consider that these events were simultaneous, then it is plausible to argue that they were all part of the same process by which Schmidt was using his printing-house to publish magazines that could reach a greater nationwide circulation through a focus on a mixture of caricatures, photographs and texts, and a large amount of advertisements. Moreover, if we take into account the fact that Schmidt renovated his business and aimed it at a wider audience, the change did not happen until he edited *Fon-Fon!* in 1907-1908. Schmidt himself was not the director of the magazine, but only offering the services of his printing-house for the magazine to be edited and printed (DOU, 28 February 1907, p. 1441).

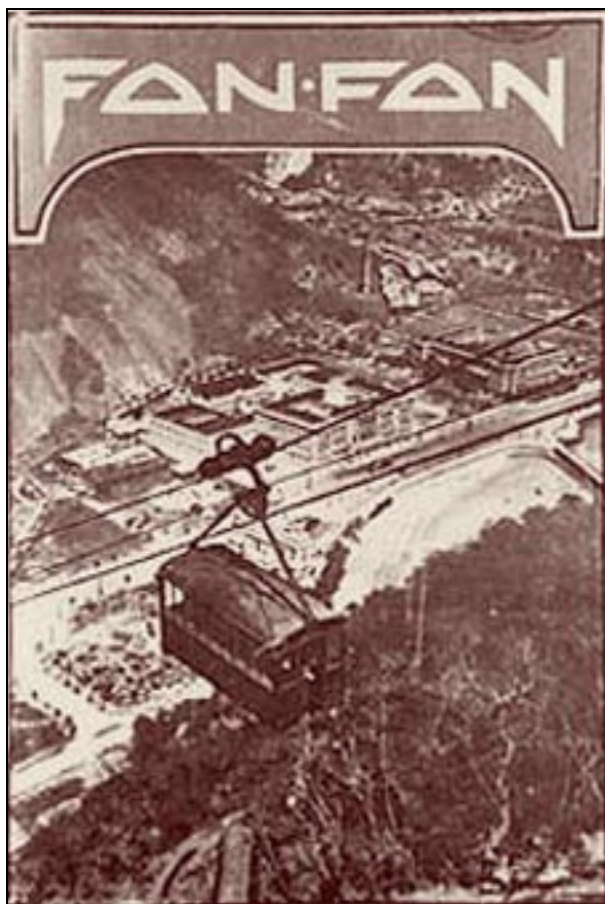


Figure 3 - Issue of *Fon-Fon!* from 1908. The picture is taken from the Sugar Loaf mountain. On the background, the National Exposition of 1908 held at Urca's neighbourhood.

A plausible explanation for Schmidt closing down *Kósmos* in 1909 and developing *Careta* in 1908 might be found in the early history of *Fon-Fon!*. The latter publication was founded in 1907 by the entrepreneurs Giovanni Fogliani and A. Gasparoni along with a group of journalists (Gonzaga Duque, Lima Campos and Mário Pederneiras) with the aim of producing a “semanário alegre, político, crítico e esfuziante; noticiário avariado, telegrafia sem arame, crônica epidêmica”, with a circulation of “100.000 quilômetros por hora”. The first issue, published on 15 April, develops the metaphor of the magazine as a car blowing its horn (as is evident from its onomatopoeic title), with collaborators as drivers and the printing-house (*Kósmos*) as its fuel (*Fon-Fon!*, n. 1, 15 April 1907).

Fon-Fon! differed significantly from *Kósmos*. The editors of *Fon-Fon!* intended to reaching a very large and general audience through mass circulation, following the pattern of foreign magazines, but so was *O Malho*, a successful illustrated humorous magazine founded in 1902 by Luis Bartholomeu Antonio Agnello de Souza e Silva (a Member of Parliament) and Antonio Azeredo (a Senator), with Crispino do Amaral as the main caricaturist.

Although unlike in tone and perspective, *Fon-Fon!* and *O Malho* were both edited as nationally circulated magazines. *Fon-Fon!* differed from *O Malho* in one main aspect: it did not target the working classes. While *Fon-Fon!* tried to be representative of an upscale modern urban experience, based on the speed of the automobile, *O Malho* claimed explicitly to speak for and on behalf of the working classes: “Sempre na defesa das classes populares, a velha revista vive do povo para o povo!” declares an advert often published in the 1920s in *O Malho*.



Figure 4 - *O malho*, n. 11, 29 November 1902.

In his 1919 essay “A caricatura no Brasil”, Monteiro Lobato claimed that *O Malho* was the first humorous magazine to succeed commercially under the Republican regime, and the reason for this success was in the strategy of “fazer-se profundamente popular” (Lobato, 1964, p.20). According to him, true popularity was achieved when a publication managed to reach a mass lower class readership including: “guarda-freios da Central, chefes-de-linha, estivadores, carroceiros, motoristas, porteiros, garçons, estafetas, caixeirinhos, irmãos de S. Benedito, guarda-chaves” (Lobato, 1964, p.20). For him, *O Malho* attracted these people

through its caricatures of politicians and captions with dialogues using contemporary slang. This strategy made *O Malho* popular among working class people who were “ligados a algum paredro pelo fio do voto” (Lobato, 1964, p.20).

Published on 20 September 1902, the first issue is eloquent about the programme of the magazine, emphasising the social contribution that humour and satire can provide to a nation:

O povo rirá ao ver como se bate o ferro nesta oficina e só com isso ficaremos satisfeitos, com a tranquila consciência de quem cumpre um alto dever social e concorre eficazmente para o melhoramento e progresso da raça humana. [...] Os senhores nunca imaginarão o que nos custou de sacrifícios de todo o gênero, de noites mal dormidas e de jantares mal digeridos esta gloriosa concepção! Mas que querem? – o patriotismo é isso mesmo: - ai lhe damos esta maravilha por... uns miseráveis duzentos réis (*O Malho*, n. 1, 20 September 1902).²

Commercially speaking, *O Malho* was a very successful publishing venture, soon experiencing a boom in sales. In 1906, according to the editors, the publication had already multiplied by ten the number of issues sold weekly, reaching a circulation of 40,000 (*O Malho*, 24 March 1906). It is very likely that *Fon-Fon!* was in part created to participate in this magazine boom in Rio de Janeiro at the time, but targeting middle class readers instead. However, in 1908, *Fon-Fon!*'s owners moved “garages”: they left the partnership with Kósmos and changed to another publishing house located at no. 54, Rua da Assembleia (*Fon-Fon!* n° 03 ano II, 25 April 1908).

On 6 June 1908, *Careta* was released as the newest magazine in town, printed by Kósmos and run by Schmidt. It is very likely that he wanted to use the model of *Fon-Fon!*, which had proved to be profitable, and print his own popular nationwide magazine. The first managing editor was Mario Bhering, the senior journalist was Leal de Souza and the team included a photographer, known as Botelho, and a caricaturist: J. Carlos. In 1908, J. Carlos was collaborating with *Fon-Fon!*, but when the owners decided to move to another publishing house, rather than moving with them, he chose to work exclusively for *Careta*.⁷

² People will laugh when they see the way we strike the iron in this workshop, and so long as they do so we will be satisfied, our consciences clear, because we know that we are fulfilling an important social duty, helping to efficiently promote the progress and betterment of the human race. [...] You cannot imagine how much effort and sacrifices of all kinds we have endured because of this glorious idea: the number of sleepless nights and badly-digested dinners! But what do you expect? That's what patriotism is all about! And then we offer you this marvellous magazine for... a measly 200 réis.



Figure 5 - Mario Bhering, *Careta*'s first editor, by J. Carlos. *Careta*, n. 210, 8 June 1912.

I have shown that the birth of *Careta* is part of the shift of well-printed cheap magazines towards a nationwide circulation, and related to other magazines such as *O Malho*, *Kósmos*, and *Fon-Fon!*. That said, it is important now to describe *Careta*'s position in the illustrated magazine market at the turn-of-the-century in Brazil. I will shed light on the specificities of the readership of *Careta* by comparing and contrasting the price, symbol, agenda, name and headers of *O Malho*, *Fon-Fon!* and *Careta*. Alongside these comparisons I will highlight relevant features of their readership and contents.

***Careta*'s features**

The price is the first relevant difference between these three magazines. The first issue of *Careta* appeared in 1908 costing \$300; the same price as *O Malho*, and cheaper

than *Fon-Fon!* (which cost \$400). These prices show that none of the three magazines were very expensive for the general public, if one compares them with the fares for tram journeys in 1908: a single ticket cost \$200.⁸ This simple comparison helps to clarify why these magazines achieved such a large circulation in Brazil, since a wide range of people could afford to buy these periodicals every week.

These prices indicate that *Careta* was intended to compete more directly with *O Malho* than *Fon-Fon!*. However it is not only the price which indicates this. Both were humorous magazines targeting large audiences among the lower and middle classes. As I mentioned above, the programme of *O Malho* was to criticise through humour on behalf of the masses. The editors wanted to make “o povo rir” with caricatures, texts and photographs, which focused on politics and everyday life with a comic tone.

Careta was also created to be a popular magazine, reaching a large readership. In fact, the editorial that introduced it to the readers in the first issue in 1908 emphasises the need for the “Público com P maiúsculo” or, in other words, a nationwide audience:

Lançando à publicidade este semanário, é preciso confessar, e contrariamente o fazemos, que a *Careta* é feita para o Público, o grande e respeitável Público com P. grande! / [...] A nossa esperança é justamente que o público morra pela *Careta*, afim de que ela viva (“Artigo de fundo”. *Careta*, n. 1, 6 June 1908).³

From this statement, it is evident that the editors were targeting the general public throughout Brazil, not any specific demographic. Both *Careta* and *O Malho* mention the general idea of “povo”, but they do not define it further. *Fon-Fon!*, on the other hand, does not even adopt the role of speaking on behalf of the “povo”. Instead, the editors of *Fon-Fon!* aimed at publishing a popular magazine, focusing on cosmopolitan and international aspects, offering its readers the latest news on fashion in Paris and at elegant events in Rio and São Paulo. When flipping through the pages of *Fon-Fon!* one can see that there is almost no level of identification with a working class readership which might explain why *Fon-Fon!* was a little more expensive.

Although these magazines might have shared the same main readership (middle classes), they all had clearly different focuses. If the focus of *O Malho* was the “classes populares” and that of *Fon-Fon!* was the upper middle classes who understood Paris as a cultural reference, *Careta* seems to epitomise both trends by combining them in the same magazine. By following this strategy, the magazine was able to attain a larger readership which potentially included readers of *O Malho* and *Fon-Fon!*. This seems to be one of the

³ As we launch this weekly magazine, we must confess, against our better judgement, that *Careta* is edited for the Public, the great and respectable Public with a capital P. / [...] Our hope is precisely that the public ends up dying for *Careta*, in order that it may live.

main reasons for *Careta* achieving the position of one of the best-selling magazine during the first decades of the twentieth century.

In order to evaluate what kind of images these magazines were selling to the public, I will now analyse their symbols and headers. These images are important as they appeared in every issue published and can potentially affect the reader's identification with the magazine.



Figure 6 - *O malho*, n. 1, 20 September 1902.

The symbol of *O Malho* is a jester with a hammer, ready to attack anything or anyone that appears in front of him. Although the expression “malhar” means (informally) to criticise or attack someone verbally, its origin and formal use is related to the metallurgical process of forging iron and steel.⁹ Metalworking is traditionally carried out by a blacksmith who uses a hammer and anvil to shape iron. Thus, the header above associates the magazine with the character of a blacksmith-jester who amuses readers by telling jokes and providing general satirical entertainment. He is creative and destructive at the same time, shaping comedy and stories out of raw material.

Therefore the name of the magazine seems to be pointing to both the formal and informal meanings of the verb “malhar” in Portuguese. This double sense is clear on the cover of the first issue of the “semanário humorístico, artístico e literário”, published in 1902, where the blacksmith appears with his hammers next to an anvil and surrounded by folders labelled “cumprimentos à imprensa”, “política”, “assuntos diversos”, “arte” and “literatura”, presenting them proudly, as if he had produced them all with his “malho”.



Figure 7 - *O malho*, n° 1, 20 September 1902

The symbolic character of a blacksmith fits with the agenda of the magazine, since this occupation is traditionally related to the working classes. Moreover, it is possible to argue that the action of shaping iron can be extended to the objectives of the magazine, as it was a periodical owned by two politicians who used the magazine as an instrument to attack political opponents, sometimes defeating them.¹⁰

In contrast, *Fon-Fon!* was a modern magazine known not for being a political force but rather a periodical supported by men of letters who were members of the symbolist group led by the poet Gonzaga Duque.¹¹ The main symbol used by the magazine and expressed by its onomatopoeic name was a car driven by a chauffeur who presses a klaxon to warn passers-by (readers?) and other vehicles (magazines?) to clear the way; on the back-seat there is a man wearing a smart suit and a top-hat.



Figure 8 - *Fon-Fon!*, n°11, 20 June 1908.

Speedy and new technologies are part of the imagery of this magazine, which epitomises the ascension of the automotive era. In terms of the readership's identification with the magazine's symbol, this perspective is very different from *O Malho's*, since a car was still an exclusive commodity in Brazil, owned only by the upper classes.¹² Moreover, cars were symbols of progress, of civilization, machines that were pointing to the future. The spirit of *Fon-Fon!* was based on this new temporal experience in the modern city. The editors created a magazine which was putting forward the idea of modernity by instructing its readers and making them familiar with the new way of apprehending the relationship between space and time (Velloso, 2010, p. 98).

Careta was likewise concerned with foregrounding this new urban experience, albeit not to the same extent as *Fon-Fon!*. The symbolism of *Careta* was quite different; in fact, in the first issues there was no emblematic character or symbol. Until the end of 1910, *Careta* used a very simple header without any image or character to reinforce the meaning of the magazine.¹³



Figure 9 – Header on the cover. *Careta*, n. 54, 12 June 1909



Figure 10 - Header inside. *Careta*, n. 54, 12 June 1909.

In other words, *Careta* came into being without a symbol, which corroborates the argument that the magazine was created in haste in order to fill the gap in Schmidt's business after the editors of *Fon-Fon!* decided to print their magazine in another publishing house. It was only in 1911, on the third anniversary of the magazine's founding, that a woman appeared as the personification of *Careta*.



Figure 11 - *Careta*, n. 157, 3 June 1911.

The character is introduced in the act of flipping the pages of the magazine that she represents, letting five fool-like figures, holding mock sceptres, escape.¹⁴ The girl *Careta* seems to be opening a Pandora's box, where five comic figures come out as if they were participating in Carnival or performing to an audience that metaphorically plays the role of the king. These five fools, who represent the main team of collaborators of the magazine¹⁵, appear in the process of amusing the audience. *Careta*, the character, is not looking at them, but at the reader/king, as if presenting her fools. In other words, a group of fools is introduced by the figure of a young woman who dresses fashionably (short dress, hairstyle, make-up, hat) but with a fool's ruff.

Interestingly, there is a disproportion in their sizes. *Careta* (the girl) is the same height as the magazine page, but the fools are like performing dwarfs, the magazine being their stage. This disproportionate representation corroborates the idea that the five comic figures are fools, since this is a very common depiction of fools worldwide, as Janik points out: "like dress, the body shape of fools is identifiable and different from the norm. Often fools are physically smaller" (1998, p.7). The depiction of the collaborators as fools is key for the comic tone of *Careta*.

Another depiction of the girl *Careta* appears again one year later, on the magazine's fifth anniversary, but this time with dark hair.



Figure 12 - *Careta*, n. 211, 15 June 1912.

The character created by J. Carlos was soon incorporated not only on some of the covers of *Careta*, but also inside the magazine. Unlike the characters representing the other two magazines, *Careta* is female describing herself as a girl of “meiga ironia” (*Careta*, n. 211, 15 June 1912). She seems to be wearing men’s clothes (a coat, slightly too big for her),

which can be read as metaphor of the fact that a woman was symbolizing a group of men. Her outlook expresses lightness and modernity like that of women's fashion in 1910s in Rio, and also the guiding spirit of the magazine. Moreover, this was probably a strategy to incorporate female readership, as the symbols of *Fon-Fon!* and *O Malho* lacked references to women. The expansion of services and products not only for men but also for women in the Brazilian belle époque probably played a role in shaping *Careta's* identity as a woman.

Next to this illustration, printed on the same page, there is an autobiographical text by *Careta*, which is an interesting document about how the magazine saw “herself”, and what image she wanted to sell to the readers.

As minhas primeiras palavras de hoje, ainda cheirando ao gostoso incenso com que me perfumaram no dia radiante do meu aniversário, são de alegre e justo agradecimento, – agradecimento que abraça, nas suas espirais carinhosas, os homens que a concebem, escrevem ou pintam o meu pensamento; os artistas que o compõem, gravam e imprimem; os jornalheiros que o apregoam e espalham, e o público imenso que o acolhe e me sustenta. / Ao comércio, que faz das minhas colunas o elegante mostruário das suas especialidades, retribuindo a sua gentil estima, prometo uma vasta divulgação dos seus excelentes produtos, por que eu só anuncio produtos excelentes (*Careta*, n. 211, 15 June 1912).⁴

By mentioning the everyday life of the magazine, its collaborators, and the quality of the products advertised on its pages, the text emphasises the idea of the magazine as showcase for merchandise, which is created by writers and graphic artists. With her “meiga ironia” and large circulation, pleasing many groups in society, the girl *Careta* is a shop window herself, displaying humour, poetry, prose-fiction, goods and services, all in the same place. Created to be of large circulation nationwide, the magazine was therefore able to advertise either expensive or cheap products targeting both men and women as part of the sales tactics.

If the symbols of *Fon-Fon!* and *O Malho* suggest movement, as the car is accelerating and the blacksmith is about to smash something with his hammer, the symbol of *Careta* suggests a different type of action: observation. That is what she is doing when she introduces herself and also on many of the covers on which she features.

⁴ Today, still fragrant with the lovely scent of the incense with which I was perfumed on the glorious occasion of my birthday, my first words are of joyous and fitting thanks. My gratitude, in spirals of affection, embraces the men who conceive, write and paint my thoughts; the artists who compose, record and print these thoughts; the newsmen who proclaim and circulate them, and the massive audience of readers which welcomes and thus sustains me. / To the retailers who make my columns into elegant displays of their goods, to reciprocate for their kind esteem, I promise that their excellent products will be advertised far and wide, for I only advertise excellent products.



Figure 13 - *Careta*, n. 166, 5 August 1911.

She is witness to the idiosyncrasies of her nation, as a fool is to his court. She acts as a mischievous observer of the political and social everyday life of Rio, and by extension Brazil. In contrast to the blacksmith of *O Malho* and the driver of *Fon-Fon!*, she does not explicitly speak on behalf of the “povo”, nor does she support elitism. Rather, she uses wit to comment upon and evaluate what is taking place around her, what has happened during the week. Acting as representative for a group of fools, she is a modern, fashionable young woman who provides entertainment, criticism, news, humour and goods to her audience.

The focus on caricatures mixed with short and comic texts, and a low price enabled the magazine to potentially reach readers with diverse interests and levels of literacy, from the upper to the lower classes nationally but also internationally. One example of this international readership appears in a story told by Raymundo Magalhães and transcribed by Herman Lima. In the Brazilian pavilion at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, Raymundo Magalhães met an Anglo-American businessman who manufactured freezers and who shared the same surname – Magalhães (his forebears were Portuguese). As they talked about a potential family relationship, the man mentioned that he was a reader of *Careta*:

“Como? - indaga Magalhães - Um milionário norte-americano, leitor de *Careta*, e sem saber palavra de português. Ele me explicou. Sua companhia lhe mandara, uma vez, comprovantes de anúncios, do Brasil, e em meio desses comprovantes tinham ido números de *Careta*. Tratando-se de um jornal de caricaturas - ele também recebia o *Punch*, de Londres, e o *Le Rire*, de Paris - quis saber do que se tratava. Chamou tradutores. Fez traduzir as legendas das caricaturas. Deliciou-se e pediu que lhe mandassem sempre *Careta*. Era a leitura dos seus week-ends, cuidadosamente traduzida por uma funcionária da companhia (Lima, 1963, p.150).⁵

Another example of an international audience can be seen in illustrated magazines such as the *Evening Illustrated Ledger* and *Review of the Reviews*, which published caricatures by J. Carlos, which originally appeared in *Careta*, among works by internationally known caricaturists.



Figure 14 (left) - *Evening Public Ledger*, 13 September 1917. The caricature by J. Carlos is the first on the left.

Figure 15 (right) - *Review of the Reviews*, March 1916, p. 204. The caricature by J. Carlos is on the bottom left.

⁵ “How come?” asks Magalhães, “An Anglo-American millionaire who reads *Careta* without knowing a word of Portuguese?” He explained how it happened. Once, his company had sent him copies of some advertisements published in Brazil, and among these copies he found some issues of *Careta*. Since it was a magazine full of caricatures – and he also received *Punch*, from London, and *Le Rire*, from Paris – he wanted to know what *Careta* was all about. He called for translators and made them translate all the captions beneath the caricatures. He was delighted with the results and asked to receive the magazine regularly from then on. *Careta* became his weekend reading matter, carefully translated by one of his employees.

Apart from this sporadic circulation of *Careta* outside Brazil, the editors also made an effort to reach foreign readers on a regular basis. In 1921, *Careta* reported that for the first time a Brazilian magazine was circulating in Buenos Aires.

Já se lê *Careta* em Buenos Aires. Na grande capital Argentina essa revista já é reclamada, lida com curiosidade e elogiada com entusiasmo. A primeira vista a notícia parece desimportante. Mas não o é, sabendo-se, como se sabe, que Buenos Aires é uma cidade de vida intensíssima, com o tempo indispensável para a rápida leitura das suas excelentes publicações semanais. / Uma concorrente estrangeira, como *Careta*, que tem venda avulsa e assinantes na capital e em outros pontos da República, e que se firma, representa alguma coisa. Acresce a circunstância de que é a única revista brasileira que, até agora, fez essas conquistas (*Careta*, n. 676, 4 June 1921).⁶

During the same period, *Careta* hired Ildefonso Falcão as a collaborator to write a weekly column “De Buenos Aires”, fostering the cultural interchange between the two nations.¹⁶ Falcão wrote many pieces on Brazilian and Argentinian music and other cultural topics, but his most common topic, as *Careta*'s international collaborator was reporting on events that were occurring in Buenos Aires.

Despite all these international connections, *Careta* was mainly a national periodical. It focused on the capital's cultural and political life, but targeting the whole of the country, as can be seen from its contents, especially the advertisements.¹⁷ An analysis of sample issues from the first decade of the magazine (1908-1917) shows that on average adverts are responsible for 35% of the content of each issue, of which 70% use either illustration or photography.¹⁸

Spread throughout the issues, the reader finds a large number of national and international products, ranging from expensive cars to cheap nail clippers which could be sent, by mail order, anywhere in Brazil. However, products related to healthcare and physical appearance are by far the most common ones. In this category of products, one can find miraculous lotions for hair loss, syrups that promise to heal all kinds of diseases, vibrating massage machines, toothpastes, hair colouring, perfumes, oils of many kinds, special potions and many other items that promised health along with social status.

The second most common category of commodity, advertised in the pages of *Careta* is clothing, including accessories, which vary from imported textiles to expensive dresses

⁶ *Careta* is now read in Buenos Aires. The magazine is already in demand, read with curiosity and praised with enthusiasm in the great Argentinian capital. At first sight, this news might seem insignificant. But it is not, since we know, indeed, it is common knowledge, that Buenos Aires is an intense and extremely lively city, which considers indispensable a quick read of its excellent weekly publications. / A foreign competitor like *Careta*, which sells single copies and subscriptions in the Capital and in other parts of the Argentinian Republic, and is consolidating its presence, does represent something significant. Furthermore, it must be noted that *Careta* is the only Brazilian magazine so far to have achieved such conquests.

and suits. Thirdly, items such as jewellery and watches appear to be good sellers among the readers. Further categories of products such as food, beverages, domestic utensils, cars, banks, musical instruments, the lottery and insurance are also common.

This wide array of products indicates that both men and women were readers of the magazine. It also shows that although *Careta* could potentially reach the working class, the target of the advertisers was the middle classes, who consumed products that apparently were produced for the upper end of the Brazilian social scale, but that in fact were affordable to many others. In other words, some products were sold as luxury items, but they were not necessarily prohibitively expensive. Often making reference to the European aristocracies and their styles, these products were part of what Jeffrey Needell (1987) calls the Brazilian fantasy at the turn of the century.¹⁹ The evidence for these middle class aspirations is a common idea that appears in many of adverts, such as the one below for the clothing emporium Ao Primeiro Barateiro: “O que há de mais fino, elegante e módico em preço. As últimas novidades recebidas das grandes capitais da elegância.”



Figure 16 - *Careta*, n° 658, 29 January 1921.

The use of illustrations and/or photography as a means of attracting readers is a common feature of these advertisements, which was encouraged by Jorge Schmidt. Apart from having the right equipment to print high quality images, Schmidt also offered to create and illustrate adverts for his customers. Hence *Careta* was attractive not only to the readers, but also to a wide range of companies. It is not difficult to find in *Careta's* pages small announcements in which the services of typography, photogravure, zincography and coloured gravure are offered by the “oficinas da *Careta*”. In some adverts, the signature of J. Carlos can be clearly seen, like the ones below.

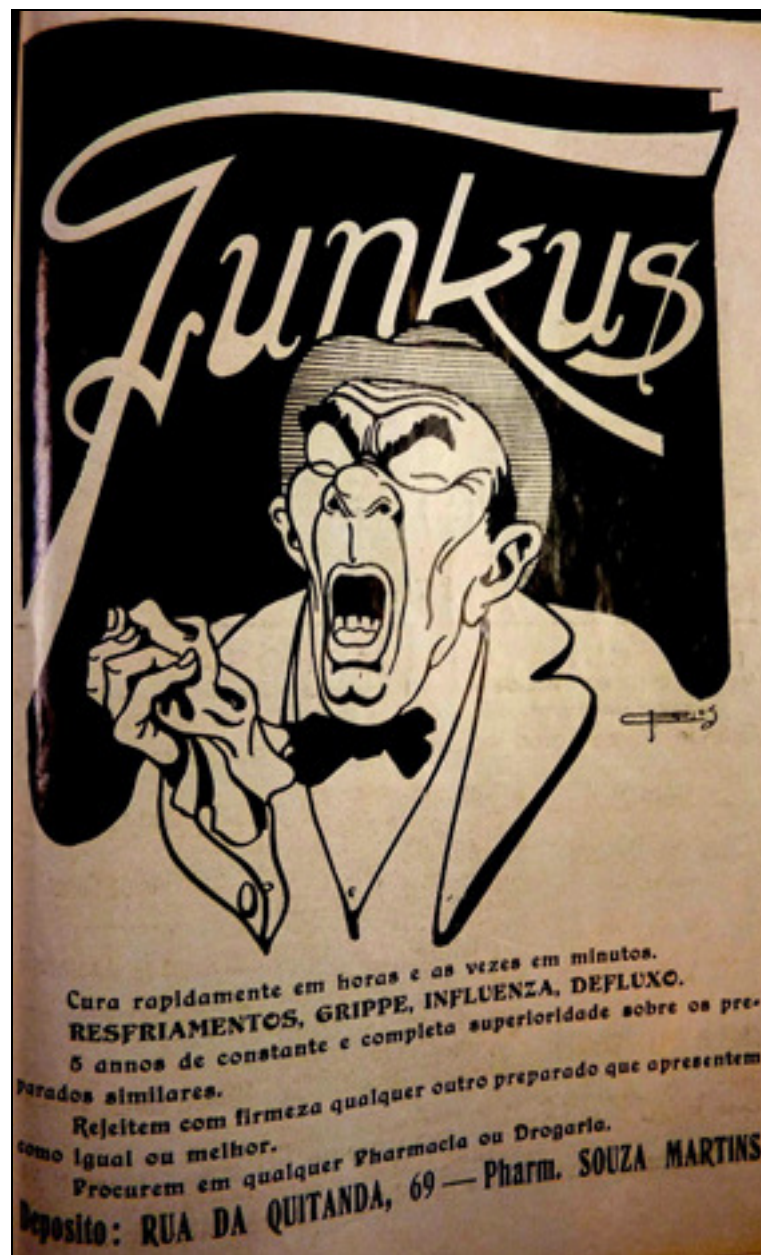


Figure 17 - Advertisement signed by J. Carlos. *Careta*, n. 205, 4 May 1912.

Another interesting exercise regarding the adverts in the magazine is to analyse the addresses of the companies' headquarters. The vast majority are based in Rio de Janeiro, but some of them have addresses in São Paulo and Porto Alegre. It is known that Rua do Ouvidor was the most stylish and expensive street in Rio at the time, only sharing its prominence after Avenida Central was established. However, what is apparent, after cataloguing the addresses is that these two streets share the pages with many others in the city centre, creating a map which spreads out to other parts of the city.²⁰ This variety of streets shows that the magazine was attractive to companies that were not necessarily based in "posh" areas of the city. Small shopkeepers were also advertising in the magazine and selling their products to a mass public.

The ideal implied reader of the magazine was anyone interested in the country's political and cultural context who wanted to be informed and entertained at the same time, and who could potentially act as a consumer of those products. Able to communicate comic messages not only to the upper classes, but to the middle and lower classes as well, regardless of gender, *Careta* was a prestigious popular nationwide magazine.

The available information about the circulation of the magazine is fragmentary, with no exact weekly issue publication figures. Loredano (2002) and Sodré (1999) state that *Careta* was the most popular of all Brazilian magazines at the beginning of the twentieth century, but this claim is hard to substantiate, since there is no evidence. However, it is clear from the information within its pages that *Careta* was a very popular magazine, competing with *O Malho*. Bearing this fact in mind, it can be inferred that *Careta* used to sell a similar number of issues or even more issues than its competitors (*O Malho*, as mentioned earlier, had a circulation of 40,000 issues per week in 1906). This number matches with that estimated in a text from *Careta* published in 1911. "História de uma anedota (contada por ela mesma)" is a very illustrative text not only in regard to the estimate of the circulation of the magazine but also to understand the everyday life of the journalists and the process of producing a weekly magazine.

Eu nasci na casa da rua da Assembleia n° 70 [the offices of Kósmos], primeiro andar, sala da frente, em uma tarde de agosto de 1908. Meu pai me atirou sobre uma folha de papel, e me leu a três companheiros, que sorriram para mim e continuaram o trabalho que estavam fazendo. Fui levada a outra sala onde fui transformada letra por letra, em um packet de chumbo e, depois de bem esfregada de tinta, passada de novo para o papel. Voltei à sala da frente onde me corrigiram e, após algumas marchas e contramarchas que não compreendi, fui colocada, entre outras, sobre uma mesa de aço. Aí sofri uma tortura, cuja lembrança ainda me arrepias as carnes. Untavam-me de tinta, colocavam-me por cima de uma folha de papel, e me davam um apertão, um esmagamento tal que comecei a ficar atordoada e perdi os sentidos. Quando voltei a mim, me achei multiplicada cinquenta mil vezes, o que me causou espanto. Em poucos dias me espraiei por todo o país. Fui lida e comentada nos bondes, nos comboios, nos

salões, nas capitais, nas vilas e aldeias. Um jornal me transcreveu, depois outro, mais outro e depois de batida, repetida, surrada, arrastada por toda a parte, perdi a frescura da mocidade, comecei a ser desprezada e caí no esquecimento (Careta, n. 157, 5 June 1911).⁷

This text reveals the extent of the nationwide circulation in 1908 (50,000 issues), and also shows how important the magazine was to the other media, since it claims that the anecdote was created by the journalists of *Careta* and transcribed by other journalists in other newspapers. With the growing success of *Careta* in its early years, of which the increasing number of advertisements is evidence, it is very probable that the circulation subsequently reached higher numbers of weekly sales.²¹

For the readers, the magazine was providing more than entertaining satirical texts and caricatures by prestigious artists and writers; it was also providing an experience of consumerism. The wide range of goods and prices made the experience of consuming affordable by people from the working to the upper classes. For the retailers, on the other hand, the magazine was an efficient way to advertise goods to a massive number of potential buyers in the whole country and therefore increase sales and profits.

However, not everything was just business. If on one hand the choice of a humorous format can be regarded as a successful strategy to communicate the content to different classes, ages and genders, on the other hand *Careta's* commitment to humorous criticism of the establishment played a great role in the magazine's identity. As I have argued, the political view and the critical tone were expressed through the figure of the fool, which epitomises the identity of the magazine. Many texts and caricatures mocked the snobbish attitude of carioca society, and depicted the working classes oppressed by politicians or republican institutions. Their jokes and pranks relied on subtle social commentary and provocative satire.

Careta, through its collaborators, delivered a sense of the problems facing the ordinary people of the Capital, acting as a mediator between the nationwide readers and the Capital's ruling elite. The magazine was one of the first examples of a cheap well-printed

⁷ I was born at Number 70, Rua da Assembleia [the offices of Kósmos], on the first floor, in the front room, on an August afternoon in 1908. My father tossed me onto a sheet of paper and read me out loud to three of his colleagues, who smiled at me and carried on with their work. Then I was taken to another room where I was transformed, letter by letter, into a block of lead, rubbed with ink and impressed once again on paper. I was sent back to the front room where I was proofread and corrected, and then, after some back and forth movements that I could not understand, I was placed, with some other jokes, onto a steel table. There I suffered a great torture, and the memory of this moment still makes me shiver. They smeared me with ink, placed me on a piece of paper, and gave me a great squeeze, pressing me so hard that I started to feel dizzy and indeed fainted. When I came to my senses, I found I had been multiplied 50,000 times, which astonished me. In a couple of days, I was scattered across the whole of the country. I was read and commented upon the trams and trains, in salons and cities, towns and villages. A newspaper transcribed me, so did another, then another and then, after being beaten, repeated, flogged, and dragged all over the place, I lost the freshness of youth and started to be ignored and later totally forgotten.

Brazilian magazine regularly reaching a large national and international readership. Hence, it is a rich historical source from which one can have a better understanding of how the current affairs in Rio de Janeiro were depicted for the local readership. Also, and more emphatically, it can reveal how the Capital was portrayed to the rest of the country and beyond, to other countries, like Argentina.

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NOTAS

1I do not include *Revista da Semana* (1900-1962) here because this magazine did not have an independent circulation from *Jornal do Brasil* until 1915.

2In 1914, before the war started, the cost of importing paper to Brazil was 600 réis/kilo. Right after the end of the war, in 1919, the price was three times higher, reaching 1\$800 réis/kilo.

3The article is signed by a pool of magazines: *Fon-Fon!*, *Careta*, *O Malho* and also *Revista da Semana*. There is no mention of page numbers in *Careta*.

4Four years later, in November 1964, the magazine reappeared under the direction of a new publishing group – *Editora Americana* – but it did not last long during that period of military dictatorship in Brazil. Another resurrection would occur almost twenty years later in 1981, this time by *Editora Três*, but *Careta* disappeared for good in February 1983.

5For example: *Conferências literárias de Medeiros e Albuquerque*; *Conferências literárias de Olavo Bilac*; and works paid by the government such as *Rosa* (1905).

6The first issue was published on 16 September 1909. With the same distinguishing features as its “mother” – caricatures and humour –, *O Filhote* differed from *Careta* only in the price (cheaper, \$200) and the day of the week that it was published (Thursday instead of Saturday). However, *O Filhote* did not share the same longevity as its “mother”, dying in 1911. The reason Schmidt launched *O filhote da Careta* in 1909, only a few months after publishing the first issue of *Careta* may well be due to restrictions regarding paper imports. According to DOU 1 November 1918, many publishing houses at the time imported paper from abroad and they had to prove that the amount imported was actually used, following the rule established by Circular do Ministério da Fazenda n° 55, de 12 de agosto de 1916. *Careta* was one of the magazines that imported the greatest number of kilos of paper in 1918. Alvaro Cotrim (1985) claims *O Filhote* was made from the surplus of *Careta*, and could not be differentiated from its “mother” in any substantial way.

7If it can be argued that the history of *Careta* cannot be told without paying attention to the pioneer Jorge Schmidt, it is also true that without J. Carlos *Careta* would have had a different personality. This self-taught artist started his long-term collaboration with *Careta*, lasting until 1921, with a break to work for the *O Malho* company until 1931. After working freelance until 1935, he went back to *Careta* just after Schmidt died and stayed there until 1950, when he died while working in his office at the magazine’s headquarters. If the art of J. Carlos subsequently became widely known and made him one of Brazil’s most important caricaturists, this glory is, in part, due to his drawings for *Careta*, where he published most of his works. For more about J. Carlos, see Lima (1963); Cotrim (1985); Lustosa (1995); Loredano (2002); and Sobral (2007).

8This transport system was used by a wide range of people and was very popular at the turn of the century (Stiel, 1984).

9See *Dicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa*.

10Sodré (1999, p. 301) states that the criticism of *O Malho* motivated a political crisis in the Brazilian parliament in 1910 which culminated with President Sabino Barroso, resigning his post. Sodré also states that *O Malho* took sides during the presidential election of 1910, helping Marshall Hermes da Fonseca to win votes over the opposition candidate Rui Barbosa, who was supported by *Careta*.

11Sodré argues “Se o primeiro grupo simbolista do Rio reunira-se, entre 1890 e 1892, na Folha Popular, de que era secretário Emiliano Pernetá, com B. Lopes, Sousa Lopes, Cruz e Sousa, Virgílio Várzea, Artur Miranda, Lima Campos e Gonzaga Duque; o último, integrado principalmente por Lima Campos, Gonzaga Duque, Mário Pederneiras, Álvaro Moreyra e Hermes Fontes, foi responsável pelo aparecimento, em 1907, da revista Fon-Fon!” (Sodré, 1999: p.301).

12“Em vez de sete automóveis particulares, licenciados em 1904, a estatística municipal registra doze no ano seguinte e trinta e cinco em 1906. Nesse ano, trafegam os primeiros automóveis a frete [...]. Não são mais de trinta e um. Mediante a taxa de 5\$000 dão pequeno giro pelas ruas centrais. Estacionam em frente ao Café Jeremias, na Avenida Central” (Menezes, 1966, p.275).

13A new layout for the magazine was released with issue n. 135, on 31 December 1910.

14The same mock sceptre appears on the header of O Malho. This symbol was also part of the header of the Anglo-American magazine Puck, representing Shakespeare's magical trickster character from A Midsummer Night's Dream.

15I have identified caricatures of Mario Bhering (bottom centre), J. Carlos (at the top) and Leal de Souza (bottom right) in this picture. The one to the bottom left seems to be J. Schmidt and the other I could not identify.

16Ildefonso Falcão was a diplomat of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was transferred to Buenos Aires in 1919 (DOU, 11 July 1919, p. 9709). He became an ambassador a few years later, with posts in the USA, Netherlands and Germany.

17Even without clear evidence, it is plausible to infer that the distribution of the magazine was made via the postal service which used the railways to link the various and distant areas of the country. The national distribution is evident from the letters sent in by the readers from distant states in the south and north of Brazil to the magazine's main office in Rio. They were either commenting on past issues, sending poems or stories to be published, or replying to invitations to participate in one of the “concursos” which the editors organised in order to promote Careta.

18This analysis was made by cataloguing adverts of sample issues from each of the first ten years. This number does not include paid contents that might have been included in the magazine without being clearly defined as advertisements.

19Needell uses this expression while analysing the role of culture of European derivation in the social and economic structure of Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the twentieth century. He argues that these European references served to maintain and promote the interests and vision of the Brazilian elite (Needell 1987, p.148).

20Including streets such as Acre, Andradas, Assembleia, Avenida Passos, Candelária, Carioca, Constituição, General Câmara, Gonçalves Dias, Hospício, Largo de S. Francisco, Ourives, Praça Tiradentes, Primeiro de Março, Quitanda, Riachuelo, Rodrigo Silva, Theofilo Ottoni, Uruguaiana, and others.

21 In Brazil, in the beginning of the 1910s some of the newspapers reached a circulation of 100,000 issues (Lloyd 1913).

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